Elizabeth Glaser contracted HIV from a blood transfusion in 1981 after giving birth to her daughter, Ariel. She and her husband, Paul, later learned that Elizabeth had unknowingly passed the virus to Ariel through breast milk and that their son, Jake, had also contracted the virus. In those early days of the HIV epidemic, no drugs had been tested or approved for use in children—which caused frustration and grief for the Glasers as they fought for the lives of their children.

Elizabeth rose to action to save the lives of her children. She approached her closest friends Susie Zeegen and Susan DeLaurentis, and together they created the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, with one critical mission: to bring treatment and hope of life to children diagnosed with HIV and AIDS. The three founders began raising money for pediatric HIV/AIDS research. They hosted collaborative think tanks with top scientists and met with Presidents Reagan and Bush, members of Congress, and other policy makers, demanding political action.

Ariel lost her battle with AIDS in 1988. Elizabeth fought on to make pediatric HIV treatment a reality—fighting, not only to preserve Jake’s life and health, but the health and lives of children everywhere. Elizabeth lost her own battle with AIDS in 1994, but her hard work had yielded results. Effective antiretroviral treatments were in development for children, and a landmark study had proven that mother-to-child transmission of HIV could be greatly reduced through antiretroviral use.

Shortly after Elizabeth’s death, the Pediatric AIDS Foundation was renamed in her honor. The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) has become the leading global nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing pediatric HIV infection and eliminating pediatric AIDS. The organization accomplishes its mission through research; advocacy; and the implementation of comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment programs. Since EGPAF’s inception, new HIV infections in children have declined by 95 percent in the United States and by 58 percent worldwide.

Although a cure for HIV remains elusive, we have proven that HIV infection in children is both preventable and treatable. Mother-to-child transmission of HIV can be virtually eliminated if pregnant women have timely access to HIV prevention and the antiretroviral treatment nurtured by Elizabeth and her two friends, Susie and Susan.

Elizabeth’s legacy lives on in Jake, who is now a healthy adult. Her promise to her son remains EGPAF’s promise to all of the children of the world: We will do whatever it takes until no child has AIDS.